

Proposal to the Mesa City Council Re: Policy on Plastic Bags
Submitted by Students at Rhodes Jr. High in
Jeff Anderson's 8th grade ELP social studies class, 1st hour

Given #1: plastic bags endanger the environment due to runaway litter affecting landscapes, cityscapes, lakes & oceans. The fact that plastic bags take 300 - 500 years to decompose is the major concern which leads to a detrimental affect on wildlife on land and sea, and the clutter of litter wherever the wind and ocean currents carry them.

Given #2: The following examples of bans on plastic bags:

- A) the nation of China, with 1.3 billion people, has banned plastic bags
- B) the city of San Francisco has also banned plastic bags
- C) the city of Washington, D.C. has placed a 5 cent surcharge on plastic bags used by customers to carry out purchased retail items

The consequences if we remain status quo: Our growing population will magnify the plastic bag problems as time goes on. Even more litter and even more wildlife tragedies.

The consequences if Mesa takes aggressive steps: Our sister cities may jump on board and thereby double or triple our effectiveness in reducing the harmful environmental impact of plastic bag litter. In the long haul, Arizona could join China, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. as leaders in eliminating the disasterous impact plastic bags have on our environment.

Class proposals: These are incremental from most profound on down to least profound -

- 1) a city ordinance banning the use of plastic bags by retailers in the city of Mesa
- 2) a city surcharge of 5 cents on plastic bags used by customers to carry out purchased retail items (similar to Washington, D.C.)
- 3) an aggressive city recycling program coupled with an equally strong campaign encouraging the use of reusable cloth bags. In this scenario, retailers would be strongly encouraged to embrace public support for recycling used plastic bags and for encouraging the use of reusable cloth bags.
 - Additionally, the city could develop an incentive program to retailers who collect recycled plastic bags, and for those retailers that aggressively promote the use of re-usable cloth bags.

Lastly, we realize that much more research and much more retail buy-in are needed. Perhaps we are only scratching the surface to our ultimate goal, but let us begin. Perhaps the City of Mesa can take the lead in researching our cause, and in creating a "council of retailers" which might embrace this cause, and others, for the betterment of our business community at large.

Thank-you!

From the Students at Rhodes Jr. High

*Ireland 15c tax per bag resulted in
a 90% reduction of bag use*